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RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 4100
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC
RUEHC/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHDC
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC
RUCPDC/NOAA WASHINGTON DC
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC
RUEAEPA/EPA WASHDC
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 003810

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR OES/PCI, OES/STC, OES/SAT, OES/EGC, AND SCA/INS
STATE FOR STAS
DOE FOR INTERNATIONAL
HHS FOR OGHA STEIGER, HICKEY AND VALDEZ
NIH FOR GLASS AND MAMPILLY
FDA FOR LUMPKIN AND WELSCH
CDC FOR BLOUNT AND FARRELL
INTERIOR FOR FWS RILEY
STATE PASS TO NSF FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [TSPL](#) [TBIO](#) [ECON](#) [SOCI](#) [KSCA](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: NEW DELHI ESTH OFFICE HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE WEEK OF August 13
- 17, 2007

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1. (U) Summary: This week the ESTH office met with a filmmaker to discuss a proposal for a television series on climate change, with FICCI to discuss the planning of the upcoming "Innovation - Advantage India" conference, and also noted Japanese investment in a new IIT to be located in Bihar, a ruling of the Madras High Court impacting pharmaceuticals, a potential drug shortage in Manipur, and localized outbreaks of Hepatitis E, Indian tick typhus, and Japanese Encephalitis. End Summary.

ENVIRONMENT

2. (SBU) SciOff and SciFSN met with filmmaker Nila Madhab Panda, director of "Climate's First Orphans," a film funded by the British High Commission, regarding a proposal for a 52 episode fictional television show targeted towards climate change awareness. Panda has won awards for similar work on the topic of female feticide. SciOff questioned how Panda planned to adapt climate change to a milieu best structured to social issues and unfortunately his response was somewhat vague. He also didn't seem to have a strong understanding of the differences between local environmental issues and the effects of Global Climate Change (GCC). However, Panda is clearly a talented director and we are considering partnering him with the Centre for Science and Environment to document unprecedented climatic phenomena believed to be associated with GCC such as the 2005 Mumbai rain event.

SCIENCE

13. (U) SciCouns has learned from his India Institutes of Technology (IIT) contacts that Japan will provide technical and funding support for a new IIT to be located on the outskirts of Patna, the capital of Bihar. According to local contacts, the new IIT will be a topic of discussion during the visit of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe August 21. In addition, local media report Japan is also collaborating in the re-opening of the ancient Indian University at Nalanda in the state.

TECHNOLOGY

14. (U) While the debate on the 123 Agreement continues on the political front, there is a different crisis brewing at India's nuclear power plants. As reported in the Indian Express, the country's nuclear plants are running low on fuel due to delays in mining operations at the Jaduguda uranium mine in Jharkhand. This shortage is impacting the performance of the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) which has reportedly been forced to cut power production by 30%. NPCIL Director Jain was quoted as stating the fuel shortage resulted in a loss of approximately \$200M in potential revenue.

15. (U) SciCouns met with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) representatives to discuss the planning of the "Innovation - Advantage India" conference on December, 5-6, 2007. S&T Minister Sibal has invited Dr. John Marburger, Science Advisor to the President to address this conference. Dr. Marburger was planning to attend the FICCI sponsored "Mind to Market" meeting in December, 2006 but was unable to do so for personal reasons. Minister Sibal is also planning a visit to the United States, tentative dates are September 13-18, and is expected to meet with Dr. Marburger on September 17.

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HEALTH

16. (U) After months of delay, the Madras High Court dismissed a petition filed by the Swiss pharmaceutical firm Novartis that challenged section 3d of the newly framed Indian Patent Act (IPA) claiming it violated article 27 of the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement. Section 3d of the IPA prohibits patenting modifications to an existing drug unless the modified drug is significantly more effective than the originally patented product. Novartis had sought patent protection for a new version of its leukemia drug Gleevec, known in India as Glivec. The court concluded it lacked jurisdiction and directed Novartis to take up the issue with the WTO Dispute Settlement Body.

17. (U) Local media report an acute drug shortage is likely in Manipur with over 90% of the pharmaceutical companies not sending fresh stocks of medicines to the state due to monetary demands from insurgent organizations. Though the companies have refused these illegal demands, they have also ceased drug supply to the state.

18. (U) The health authorities have confirmed an outbreak of hepatitis E in Ishber and Harwan areas of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. According to reports, 400 people with clinical jaundice were found during a survey conducted in the affected areas. This outbreak is believed to reflect a deficiency in the public water supply.

19. (U) The virologists at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) suspect that the dengue virus isolated from the recent hemorrhagic case in Kolkata (West Bengal) has changed its genetic arrangement to counteract the existing antibody. To confirm this, the ICMR scientists have decided to study the genetic sequence of the isolated virus.

110. (U) The mysterious fever outbreak in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh has turned out to be Indian tick typhus caused by

Rickettsia conorii, according to the initial report of samples sent to National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), Delhi. This is the first time this disease has been reported in the state.

¶11. (U) During the past month, an outbreak of Japanese Encephalitis has been reported in Sivasagar, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Lakhimpur and Dhemaji districts of Assam. According to media sources, about 160 deaths have been reported in these districts, with Sivasagar in upper Assam being hit the hardest.

WHITE